

Quicken the victor in lawsuit on overtime

A federal court jury ruled in favor of Quicken Loans this morning in a lawsuit seeking back overtime pay for former Quicken's employees.

By finding for the company, the jury found that the nearly 400 former Quicken employees suing for overtime were not strictly salespeople, but rather mortgage bankers with broader responsibilities. Under federal labor law, had the jury found that the ex-employees were salespeople, they would have been eligible for overtime pay. They will get nothing now under the jury's verdict.

The verdict was a major victory for Quicken founder and chairman Dan Gilbert, who expressed delight afterward.

"It was never about money for us," Gilbert said at the federal courthouse in Detroit. "It was always about right and wrong."

Don Nichols, a Minneapolis-based attorney representing the ex-Quicken workers, said he would appeal certain aspects of the verdict. And he noted that his firm still has three other Quicken overtime cases pending, covering more than 1,000 workers in all.

"It's been a six-year fight that's not even half over," he said, adding, "We're disappointed in the verdict, to say the least."

Gilbert and other Quicken executives had rushed to the federal courthouse when word came that a verdict had been reached this morning. Gilbert has long contended that the ex-employees suing Quicken had been talked into suing by Nichols' firm, in attempt to wrest a big settlement from Quicken.

"People, including juries, are willing to stand up to extortionist law firms," Gilbert said following the verdict outside the courtroom of U.S. District Judge Stephen Murphy III, who presided over the case.

Once outside the courthouse on West Lafayette Boulevard, one or more of the Quicken executives let out boisterous war whoops.